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AUTHOR Alperstein, Gerald; And Others
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ABSTRACT

Two research reports on newspaper readership and two summaries of recent newspaper research from other periodicals are reported in the American Newspaper Publishers Association's "ANPA News Research Report Number 26." The first study identifies factors explaining the fluctuations in Canadian daily newspaper household penetration, including weekly newspaper penetration, the amount of local information in the daily newspaper, and home city dominance, but not television, radio, or monthly magazine media habits. The second study examines audience motivations that predicted newspaper reading habits. The report also contains two summaries of newspaper research that appeared in periodicals, one dealing with the role of managing editors and the other concerning community structure and media availability and preferences. (RL)

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American Newspaper Publishers Association

# ANPA NEWS RESEARCH REPORT

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A REPORT FOR EDITORS PROVIDED IN COORDINATION WITH THE NEWSPAPER READERSHIP COUNCIL

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## The Influence of Local Information On Daily Newspaper Household Penetration In Canada

By Gerald Alperstein

HIGHLIGHTS: Fluctuations in daily newspaper household penetration can be explained by weekly newspaper household penetration (especially paid weeklies), home city dominance (that is, the proportion of households in the daily newspaper's home city), and amount of local information (both news and advertising) published by a daily newspaper for the home city. Differences in daily newspaper household penetration are not attributable to television, radio or monthly magazine media habits.

and

## Personal Motivations and Newspaper Readership

By Lee B. Becker, Erik L. Collins and Jeffrey W. Fruit

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TO THE EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)."

HIGHLIGHTS: Audience motivations were generally found to be good predictors of newspaper reading habits—in terms of reading frequency, thoroughness of reading and types of items read. Despite substantial differences in many motivations of nonreaders, infrequent readers and frequent readers, all three groups indicated similar desires of seeking entertainment and relaxation from the media

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American Newspaper Publishers Association
The Newspaper Center, Box 17407, Dulles International Airport, Washington, D.C. 20041
Katharine Graham, Chairman and President Jerry W. Friedheim, General Manager
Maxwell E. McCombs, Director, ANPA News Research Center

# The Influence of Local Information on Daily Newspaper Household Penetration in Canada

**By Gerald Alperstein**

*This study was a portion of Gerald Alperstein's Ph.D. dissertation at Syracuse University. Appreciation is expressed to the Canadian Daily Newspaper Publishers Association for use of the data analyzed. Dr. Alperstein is now the associate editor of* The Public Sector, *publication of the New York state Civil Service Employees Association.*

One of the major social phenomena of the past few decades is the birth and rapid growth of suburban areas surrounding central cities. Concurrently, many daily newspapers have shown a decline of household penetration in their expanding markets. At the same time, weekly newspaper household penetration has increased.

Most daily newspapers, however, are located in the central city and mostly contain local information pertinent to their home cities, thus ignoring to some degree the local information needs of that portion of their market that lives outside the daily newspaper's home city. Weekly newspapers (including shoppers) are also major suppliers of local information, especially for suburban areas. Dailies and weeklies, therefore, compete with each other by supplying local information.

This analysis looks at the influence of local information on daily newspaper household penetration by comparing the household penetration in 69 Canadian daily newspaper *markets* to the proportion of households in the market which are in the daily newspaper's *home city;* to weekly newspaper household penetration; to the amount of local information contained in the daily newspaper; as well as to use of other media (television, radio and monthly magazines).

## Findings in Brief

- Daily newspapers with high household penetrations belong to markets where a high proportion of households are within the home city of the daily newspaper and where weekly newspaper household penetration is low.

- Weekly newspapers are most successful in markets where daily newspapers are least successful, that is, in those markets where a high proportion of households are outside of the home city of the daily newspaper.

- Daily newspapers that publish an above average amount of local information (both news and advertising) for their home city tend to have high household penetrations and belong to markets where a high proportion of households are in the home city of the daily newspaper.

- There appears to be no relationship between daily newspaper household penetration and television viewing, radio listenership and monthly magazine subscriptions. Weekly newspapers, therefore, are the only media which compete with daily newspapers. And, this competition operates on a local information dimension.

## Methodology

This report focuses on the newspaper household penetration of daily newspapers in 69 Canadian markets. These 69 markets contain more than 80 percent of all the households in Canada and represent over 90 percent of the daily newspaper circulation in Canada.

The Canadian Daily Newspaper Publishers Association (CDNPA) provided the following information for each of these 69 daily newspaper markets:

Daily Newspaper Household Penetration

Weekly Newspaper Household Penetration

Television Audience Figures

Radio Audience Figures

Monthly Magazine Subscriptions

Among the 69 markets studied, 39 were single daily newspaper markets and 30 were markets that contained more than one daily. This analysis looks at single daily newspaper markets and multiple daily markets separately because household penetration has a different meaning for each type of market.

Daily newspaper household penetration for single markets is calculated as the percentage of households in the market that receive a daily newspaper. Daily newspaper household penetration is somewhat inflated among multiple markets because the calculation does not take into account the number of households that receive more than one daily.

There are also two types of weekly newspaper circulation: "paid," which is an accurate reflection of weekly newspaper readership, and "free," which includes a large number of "never read" weekly newspapers. This report, therefore, separates weeklies into two types of markets: markets where at least 80 percent of the weekly circulation is paid, and markets where less than 60 percent of the weekly circulation is paid.

The last variable used in this analysis is the number of local items published in a daily newspaper. "Local information" was defined as any news or advertising that

was about the daily newspaper's home city. This item count was performed for 12 randomly selected daily newspapers for five randomly selected dates in 1971.

## Findings

The purpose of this study is to understand the influence of local information on daily newspaper household penetration.

This question was approached in three ways, using two indirect approaches and one direct approach: 1) the relationship between daily newspaper household penetration and home city dominance (an indirect approach), 2) the relationship between the daily newspaper household penetration and other media household penetration, i.e., weekly newspapers, television, radio and magazines (the second indirect approach), and 3) the relationship between daily newspaper household penetration and the amount of local information published by a daily newspaper (a direct approach).

*Home City Dominance.* The thought behind finding a relationship between daily newspaper household penetration and local information by looking at home city dominance is somewhat subtle (hence, we call it an indirect approach).

The first analytic approach is based on an assumption that daily newspapers provide ample local information for their home city and relatively little for their outlying suburban communities.

Given this assumption about daily newspapers and their local information content, it would be expected that daily newspaper household penetration would be highest in those markets where a high proportion of the households are in the daily newspaper's home city.

Statistical analysis confirmed this expectation (see Table 1, Line A). The statistical tool used is called the "Pearson product moment correlation." This correlation analysis yields a number that indicates whether there is a relationship between two variables and how strong the relationship is between the two variables. (The two variables in this case are daily newspaper household penetration and home city dominance). The number a correlation analysis yields ranges from "-1.00" to "+1.00." A "+1.00" means there is a perfect positive correlation between the two variables, or as one variable increases in value the other variable does exactly the same thing. A "-1.00" means there is a perfect negative or inverse relationship between the two variables, as one variable goes up or down the other variable does just the opposite. The greater the correlation, i.e., the number (either positively or negatively) the stronger the relationship. A correlation that approaches ".00" means there is no relationship.

In Table 1 A there are moderately high positive correlations between daily newspaper household penetration and home city dominance for daily newspapers in single markets (+.63 in 1961 and +.64 in 1971). The correlations for dailies in multiple markets are not as strong, but they also are positive (+.35 in 1961 and +.22 in 1971). The lower correlations for the multiple markets most likely are due to the way daily newspaper household penetration is calculated. Daily newspaper household penetration for dailies in multiple markets is probably inflated because of some overlap among those households taking more than one daily.

The reasoning behind this indirect approach was that if daily newspapers mostly provide local information pertinent to their home city; and if local information influences daily newspaper household penetration, then daily newspaper household penetration would be lower in those markets where a large portion of the households are outside the daily newspaper's home city. This was indeed the case! Conversely, daily newspaper household penetration is much higher for those daily newspapers that belong to markets where a high proportion of the households are within the daily newspaper's home city.

*Other Media.* The thought behind finding relationships between daily newspaper household penetration and local information by looking at other media use in this second analysis is also an indirect approach which warrants an introduction of its own.

This second analysis is based on the assumption that television, radio and monthly magazines are not major suppliers of local information. Weekly newspapers, on the other hand, exist primarily for the purpose of supplying local news and advertising. It was therefore anticipated that daily newspaper household penetration would have little relation to television, radio and magazine usage, but would have a strong negative relationship to weekly newspaper household penetration.

These expectations were confirmed statistically (see Table 1, Line B). There is little correlation between daily newspaper household penetration and television viewing, radio listenership, or monthly magazine subscriptions.

For weekly newspapers, however, there is a strong correlation with daily newspaper household penetration.

In other words, weekly newspapers are the main "other" media competitors of daily newspapers. And, since weekly newspapers exist primarily to supply local information, this competition between dailies and weeklies operates to a considerable degree on a local information dimension.

When weekly newspaper household penetration is evaluated in terms of the home city dominance variable, weekly newspapers are most successful in those markets where a good proportion of the households

reside outside of the daily newspaper's home city (see Table 1, Line C). This relationship is most significant when evaluating weekly newspapers that have at least 80 percent of their circulation paid.

tion printed an above average amount of local news and local display advertising. Further, five out of the six dailies with low household penetration printed a below average amount of local news and display advertising.

Table 1

| | Single Daily Newspaper Markets | | Multiple Daily Newspaper Markets | | All Daily Newspaper Markets | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | 1961 | 1971 | 1961 | 1971 | 1961 | 1971 |
| A. Daily Newspaper Household Penetration and Home City Dominance* | +.63 | +.64 | +.35 | +.22 | +.41 | +.37 |
| B. Daily Newspaper Household Penetration and | | | | | | |
| 1)Hours of Household Television Watching | ** | +.03 | ** | -.35 | ** | -.17 |
| 2) Hours of Household Radio Listening | ** | +.03 | ** | +.07 | ** | +.10 |
| 3) Monthly Magazine Household Penetration | ** | -.27 | ** | -.04 | ** | -.20 |
| 4) Weekly Newspaper Household Penetration | ** | -.43 | ** | -.13 | ** | -.23 |
| a. at least 80% of circulation paid | ** | -.70 | ** | -.39 | ** | -.53 |
| b. less than 60% of circulation paid | ** | -.55 | ** | -.67 | ** | -.58 |
| C. Weekly Newspaper Household Penetration and Home City Dominance* | ** | -.47 | ** | -.16 | ** | -.35 |
| 1) at least 80% of circulation paid | ** | -.78 | ** | -.82 | ** | -.78 |
| 2) less than 60% of circulation paid | ** | -.56 | ** | -.06 | ** | -.37 |

*"Home City Dominance" is the proportion of households in the market residing in the home city of the daily newspaper.
**Data is either unavailable or unreliable.

In other words, the most successful weeklies are those that supply local information to areas that the daily newspaper does not, i.e., the suburban areas outside of the daily newspaper's home city.

*Amount of Local Information.* In the previous analyses daily newspaper markets have been compared with each other in order to determine which types of market environments characterize a successful daily newspaper, that is, a daily newspaper with high household penetration.

In this third analysis, we are comparing different *newspapers.* This third analysis examines the importance of local information on daily newspaper household penetration by actually looking at the local content in a random sample of daily newspapers, some with high and some with low daily newspaper household penetration. Twelve dailies were randomly selected from the list of 39 dailies in single newspaper markets. (Single daily newspaper markets were chosen because it was suspected that inclusion of multiple markets would cloud the analysis since the household penetration figure for multiple markets is inflated.)

Of the 12 dailies selected, six had above average (i.e., "median") household penetration in their markets and six had below average household penetration. And, five out of the six with above average household penetra-

In other words, 10 out of the 12 single market daily newspapers were either above or below the median on both daily newspaper household penetration and amount of local information printed (both news and advertising). The same patterns emerge when local news items and local display advertising are calculated separately.

Not surprisingly, the same patterns also emerge when daily newspaper household penetration is replaced with the home city dominance variable. (Remember the high positive correlation between daily newspaper household penetration and home city dominance?)

Clearly, local information emerges as key when explaining differences in household penetration of Canadian daily newspapers, especially single market dailies.

## Summary

This analysis has attempted to show the importance of local information to daily newspaper household penetration and how local information thus relates to circulation.

This analysis has shown that the real market of daily newspapers appears to be the home city of the daily newspaper, that is, the area where the daily newspaper

generally provides a lot of local information. Daily newspaper household penetration is healthy in markets where most households are concentrated in the core city, or the daily newspaper's home city. Daily newspaper household penetration is low in markets with sprawling suburban communities.

Perhaps daily newspapers should be content to realize their market limitations. If daily newspapers, on the other hand, wish to expand their markets to the outlying suburban communities, this analysis strongly suggests that such a strategy for market growth should consider local information key in such an expansion. Successful weeklies are doing just that: providing local information to suburban communities. Weekly newspapers are thus the daily newspapers' main competitors in suburban markets. And, the main strength of weekly newspapers lies in their ability to provide local information (both news and advertising) to these suburbanites.

There is no doubt that this analysis is a true picture of the daily newspaper market situation in Canada for 1971. It is not very clear, however, if the patterns presented here are representative of 1980. It is also not as clear how appropriate this analysis is for daily newspapers in the United States . Canadian daily newspapers and United States daily newspapers do have many things in common. It is, however, recommended that a similar analysis be performed for United States daily newspapers and also that this analysis be updated for Canadian daily newspapers.

Be that as it may, the findings presented here suggest that daily newspapers in Canada as well as in the United States would do well to be aware of the size and growth patterns of their home city and suburban markets, the potential competitive edge of weekly newspapers (especially paid weeklies), and the amount of local information they are providing for their various geographic markets. ■

# Personal Motivations and Newspaper Readership

By Lee B. Becker, Erik L. Collins and Jeffrey W. Fruit

*Lee B. Becker is an associate professor in the School of Journalism at Ohio State University where Erik L. Collins is an assistant professor. Jeffrey W. Fruit is an instructor in the Department of Journalism at Ohio Wesleyan University.*

One of the simpler explanations offered in recent years for newspaper circulation trends concerns audience motivations. Motivation to read is thought to be the major difference between readers and nonreaders.

However, it has been difficult to provide strong empirical evidence to support this position for several reasons. Audience members are not used to being asked about the reasons underlying their reading habits. It is even more difficult to learn about the habits of nonreaders, who must be asked about motivations they lack. In addition, this group of nonreaders is often relatively small, making it difficult to isolate them for detailed analysis.

This study funded by the ANPA News Research Center attempted to overcome these difficulties by measuring motivations in a general way, not specifically linking them to newspaper reading habits. Nonreaders also were oversampled to increase the size of the group under study. In this way, it was possible to compare readers and nonreaders in terms of their needs and motivations.

## Findings in Brief

- In general, motivations were found to be rather good predictors of newspaper reading.
- Nonreaders and newspaper skimmers were found to be less motivated to keep up with what is going on in their communities and around the nation than readers.
- Nonreaders were no different from readers in terms of seeking entertainment and relaxation in their daily lives.
- Nonreaders were more highly motivated to seek entertainment than to keep informed on public affairs, while readers were about equally motivated to seek entertainment and to keep informed on public affairs.

## Study Design

These findings are based on interviews with 596 household heads in Columbus, Ohio and surrounding Franklin County. The interviews were conducted over the telephone by trained personnel. Survey respondents were chosen to represent persons over 18 years of age living in Columbus and surrounding communities. Fieldwork was done in April, 1978.

Persons who do not read a newspaper at least once a week were oversampled in the study. Where approximately 9 percent of household heads in the sample area report not reading a newspaper, 24 percent of the actual sample members were classified as nonreaders.

Motivations were measured by asking respondents to indicate how important each of a series of 13 needs was to them.

These needs were presented in general terms not linked to media use. For example, respondents were asked: *"How important is it to you to keep up with the latest events here in Columbus and Franklin County?"*

In addition to these questions on motivations, respondents were asked a series of questions about their readership of newspapers.

## Reading Frequency and Motivations

The general conclusion that motivations are good predictors of newspaper reading is based on an examination of the data in Table 1. All the entries in that table are the mean scores for the various motivations listed at the left. Scores range from 1 (not at all important) to 3 (very important).

The first three columns of scores on the lefthand side of Table 1, entitled "reading frequency," deal with motivation as a predictor of the frequency of newspaper reading, classifying sample members according to the number of days they read.

Nonreaders (those who read zero days) and both classes of readers indicated their strongest motivations are to have an opportunity to relax and to see things they consider entertaining.

Nonreaders indicated little motivation to keep up with merchandise or sales in local stores, to have current events information for use in conversation, and to hear arguments supporting their own position on issues.

Nonreaders did indicate some motivation to keep up with local events and government but their prime motivation was relaxation and entertainment.

Frequent readers (those who read 6-7 days), in contrast, reported high motivation for a number of reasons other than for entertainment and relaxation: to have current events information for conversation, to keep up with local events, to know about local government, and to keep up with national events.

**Table 1**

**Strength of Personal Motivations Under Various Readership Conditions**

| | Reading Frequency Read Per Week[1] | | | Read Stories About Local Government[1] | | | Read Stories About National Government | | | Read stories about Accidents/Crime[1] | | | Read Stories About Ordinary People | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | 0 (Non-Readers) | 1-5 (Infrequent Readers) | 6-7 (Frequent Readers) | Rarely | Some Time | Most Time | Rarely | Some Time | Most Time | Rarely | Some Time | Most Time | Rarely | Some Time | Most Time |
| Know about local merchandise/sales | 1.87 | 2.04 | 2.10* | 1.80 | 2.06 | 2.21* | 1.98 | 2.21 | 2.08 | 1.81 | 2.06 | 2.19* | 1.79 | 2.03 | 2.17* |
| Have opportunities to relax | 2.52 | 2.60 | 2.57 | 2.43 | 2.65 | 2.61* | 2.39 | 2.61 | 2.66* | 2.62 | 2.64 | 2.56 | 2.48 | 2.60 | 2.62 |
| See and hear entertaining things | 2.47 | 2.49 | 2.47 | 2.48 | 2.46 | 2.48 | 2.32 | 2.52 | 2.47 | 2.32 | 2.49 | 2.53* | 2.42 | 2.43 | 2.50 |
| Have current events information for conversation | 2.00 | 2.29 | 2.50* | 2.06 | 2.36 | 2.66* | 2.02 | 2.34 | 2.69* | 2.35 | 2.42 | 2.49 | 2.26 | 2.38 | 2.50* |
| See and hear arguments supporting your position | 1.89 | 2.08 | 2.11* | 1.76 | 2.06 | 2.25* | 1.77 | 2.10 | 2.20* | 1.94 | 2.07 | 2.18* | 1.74 | 2.07 | 2.16* |
| Keep up with local events | 2.17 | 2.29 | 2.49* | 1.88 | 2.34 | 2.69* | 2.00 | 2.39 | 2.60* | 2.13 | 2.40 | 2.54* | 1.88 | 2.42 | 2.49* |
| Keep up with national events | 2.08 | 2.19 | 2.46* | 1.94 | 2.33 | 2.57* | 1.71 | 2.28 | 2.70* | 2.39 | 2.41 | 2.33 | 1.97 | 2.44 | 2.39* |
| Know about local government | 2.15 | 2.27 | 2.49* | 1.67 | 2.33 | 2.79* | 1.89 | 2.36 | 2.68* | 2.29 | 2.36 | 2.52* | 1.91 | 2.42 | 2.49* |
| Know about national government | 2.13 | 2.23 | 2.40* | 1.97 | 2.47 | 2.66* | 1.85 | 2.40 | 2.76* | 2.49 | 2.51 | 2.43 | 2.12 | 2.50 | 2.40* |
| Have opinions on local issues | 2.13 | 2.23 | 2.40* | 1.79 | 2.28 | 2.64* | 1.97 | 2.30 | 2.55* | 2.14 | 2.32 | 2.47* | 1.79 | 2.37 | 2.43* |
| Have opinions on national issues | 2.01 | 2.18 | 2.40* | 1.92 | 2.30 | 2.50* | 1.81 | 2.24 | 2.61* | 2.34 | 2.31 | 2.34 | 1.94 | 2.39 | 2.35* |
| Avoid seeing and hearing local issues and problems | 1.49 | 1.43 | 1.39 | 1.51 | 1.42 | 1.31* | 1.53 | 1.41 | 1.31* | 1.42 | 1.37 | 1.39 | 1.44 | 1.47 | 1.33* |
| Avoid seeing and hearing national issues and problems | 1.47 | 1.45 | 1.38 | 1.43 | 1.47 | 1.30* | 1.50 | 1.45 | 1.30* | 1.42 | 1.38 | 1.41 | 1.41 | 1.49 | 1.35* |
| N = | 144 | 158 | 294 | 66 | 193 | 182 | 62 | 199 | 180 | 78 | 163 | 200 | 35 | 149 | 257 |

[1]Mean Values. A high score indicates the motivation was considered important, a low score indicates the reverse. The theoretical range in scores is from 1 (not at all important) to 3 (very important).

*These means are significantly different from each other at the .05 level, based on a one-way analysis of variance.

Occupying the ground between these extremes, infrequent readers (those who read 1-5 days) indicateed greater motivation than either nonreaders or frequent readers for relaxation and entertainment. Their mean scores for the other motivations range between those of the other readership classes.

### Thoroughness of Reading and Motivations

Those respondents who reported reading a newspaper were also asked to indicate how much of the newspaper they generally read.

For this analysis of the relationship between motivations and the amount of reading, readers were divided into those who typically read only one or two pages (skimmers), read some pages (less thorough readers), and read every page (thorough readers). Those persons who read the newspaper thoroughly (every page) are more highly motivated to be informed about local events, including commercial ones, than those persons who reported reading only one or two pages in the newspaper. The thorough readers also are those who want to know about current events so they can use that information in their conversations. They also are more likely than the less-thorough readers to be motivated by a need or desire to have opinions on issues, both local and national.

Again, those who read only a few pages of the newspaper and those who read nearly every page are about equal in terms of desiring relaxing and entertaining materials in their lives. But the skimmers or scanners of the newspaper are more highly motivated by this need than by the need to be informed on community affairs.

The less thorough readers also are more likely than the thorough readers to indicate a need to avoid seeing and hearing about local issues and problems as well as national ones.

### Readership of News Content and Motivation

The remaining columns of Table 1, entitled "Readership of Various Subjects," details the results of questions asked readers about four types of stories which appear in a daily newspaper. In general, motivations are better readership predictors for stories about local and national government than stories about "ordinary people" or accidents and crime.

Persons reporting rarely reading local and national stories are less likely to be motivated by a need to know about public affairs than persons reading these stories most of the time. And, conversely, those who rarely read such stories also indicated being motivated by a need to *avoid* hearing and seeing local and national issues to a greater extent than persons who read these stories most of the time.

Motivations do not appear to be consistent predictors of stories about "ordinary people" or stories about accidents or crime.

*(The motivational measures used in Table 1 did not make specific reference to the mass media; respondents were simply asked to indicate how important a series of needs were to them.)*

### Findings in Relation to Previous Research

In line with previous research in ANPA News Research Reports 14, 17, 18 and 21, it should be no surprise to learn that the nonreaders, who, as a group, are lower in their motivation to keep informed, also are more likely than the frequent readers to have lived in Franklin County for 10 years or less and are more likely to be renters than home owners. The nonreaders also are most likely to be unmarried and under 30 years of age. They are more likely to be low in formal education and to be black. They are less likely to watch local and national television news, listen to radio news, or read a news magazine. Most readership research has produced a similar picture of the chronic nonreaders. These persons—the young, the mobile, the unattached, the low educated and the black—seem to be nonusers of the media because they lack the motivation needed to be informed.

Two recent ANPA studies reached somewhat similar conclusions regarding the motivations of nonreaders and infrequent readers. Poindexter (Report No. 9) found that among the most common reasons given by nonreaders for the rejection of newspapers was lack of time and lack of interest. McLeod and Choe (Report No. 10) found that infrequent newspaper readers were less likely than frequent readers to be motivated by a desire to keep up with the latest events and to have something to talk about with others. The conversational utility measure, a strong predictor in the Columbus study as well, lends support to the contention that the nonreaders and infrequent readers are unattached to the community—or at least that part of it which places value on current affairs information.

### Implications and Recommendations

Two separate strategies for turning nonreaders into readers suggest themselves. The first is the traditional one. The newspaper product can be changed to some degree to offer these nonreaders more of the entertainment they currently read. But the inherent problem with this solution is obvious. Readers are using their newspapers to satisfy their need to keep informed about the local community and the country at large. The product should not be changed so as to make these members of the reading audience feel they are not getting the news they want.

The second strategy involves altering readers' needs rather than that of the newspapers. The data suggest

that newspapers might consider more extensive promotion of the value of being informed about community and national happenings. Newspapers might strive to increase the motivation to keep abreast of the news.

One long range way to attempt to increase this motivation is to work more closely with the local school systems and expand newspaper involvement in the classroom. Teachers could be useful outlets for information about the local newspapers and about the need to know about community affairs.

Newspapers also could modify their advertising strategies to focus on the importance of an informed citizenry and the advantages of community involvement. At present, most advertising campaigns seem to focus on the newspaper product, rather than the need it can satisfy. A campaign designed to remind audience members of the importance of keeping informed might well be more valuable for coping with circulation difficulties in the long run. ■

**These are research summaries which periodically will appear in ANPA News Research Reports. These briefs summarize studies appearing in research journals and other periodicals not on the regular reading list of newspaper people.**

## Managing Editors do More Managing than Editing

Managing editors spend only about a third of their job time on activities directly related to the production of a given day's newspaper. In an article entitled, "Managing Editors and Their Newsrooms: A Survey of 208 APME Members," published in the Winter 1978 issue of *Journalism Quarterly*, Professor Edward J. Trayes of Temple University reports that although most managing editors are promoted into their positions from editorial jobs, they spend most of their time performing non-editorial functions such as handling personnel problems, conducting staff meetings, dealing with the public as a spokesperson for the newspaper, administering and developing budgets and conferring with other newspaper departments.

Almost all of the 208 managing editors surveyed reported that they had received no in-service training to prepare them for these duties. Moreover, the majority were never given clear-cut descriptions of their responsibilities and areas of authority when they assumed their positions. Although 31 percent report directly to the publisher, 57 percent report to an executive editor, editor or general manager positioned between themselves and the publisher, a situation which sometimes causes even more confusion about editorial decision-making, and may draw even more of the managing editor's time away from the actual business of producing the paper.

Pointing out that overseeing newsgathering and production is a full-time job, Trayes laments that it is "unfortunate for someone with superior newsroom ability to be pulled away from what he knows and does best." ■

## Community Structure Determines Media Availability, Preferences

Community structure determines what kinds of media are avaialable to the population. In turn, media choices determine the uses and preferences that individuals have for different media.

For example, individuals in smaller rural communities with weekly local newspapers rely more heavily on television news and prefer it to reading the newspaper; those in larger communities with daily newspapers look more to those newspapers for their news and watch less news on television.

These findings are from a survey conducted in 19 urban, suburban and rural Minnesota communities, and reported in "Community Structure and Media Use" in the Autumn 1978 issue of *Journalism Quarterly*. Researchers C. N. Olien, G. A. Donohue and P. J. Tichenor of the University of Minnesota also found that the amount of exposure to printed news varied enormously across areas. For example, a typical citizen in a community of 40,000 with at least one daily newspaper, is exposed to 133 percent as much news as a typical citizen in a rural community of 5,770 with one weekly local newspaper.

The researchers note that the pattern of low newspaper use and higher preference for television prevailed in three suburban areas with weekly newspapers, despite their easy access to daily metropolitan newspapers. Perhaps, the researches speculated, "a high level of choice may not produce a high community-wide orientation toward newspapers, but may instead lead to high media *specialization* in a suburb."

Moreover, they conclude, it is possible that the less diversity a community enjoys both in its own structure and in the media available to it, the more likely it is to be aroused when community newspapers concentrate on a crisis situation. This could have "far-reaching consequences for information control and therefore social control if it is borne out by further evidence. ■